



SCHOOL BUS, INC.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT" **OCTOBER NEWSLETTER**

OCTOBER 15th DEADLINE IS COMING!!

Remember to have all your bus drivers trained to meet the State's requirements for annual training. October 15th is the deadline to have all drivers trained in the state. To date there have been 1563 drivers trained so far this school year. There are a few training dates left. Call Carol Uecker for details: ph 605.773.4771. SBI will also have a training session on 10/1/05 from 8:00 AM to Noon at our location.

National School Bus Safety Week is October 16 – 22nd

NSTA has posters available to you to help you promote National School Bus Safety Week in your area. To receive your posters, please contact NSTA at (800) 222-NSTA. To find out more, visit the NSTA website (www.yellowbuses.org), click on the School Bus Safety Week link on the home page and download a NSBSW booklet.

Head Start Deadline Nears

January 18, 2006, is the deadline for all Head Start students to be transported in school buses or allowable alternative vehicles (Multifunction School Activity Buses or MFSABs). As of that date, Head Start programs can no longer use vans, station wagons, or other nonconforming vehicles, whether they operate their own or contract for the service. If you transport Head Start children, you probably already meet this requirement; if you know a Head Start program that is not using school buses, this might be a good time to talk to them about contracting. January is also the end of the extension for those Head Start programs that received an extended deadline for use of child safety restraint systems and monitors. As of January 20, 2006, all children who weigh less than 50 pounds must be in height and weight appropriate restraint systems, and all buses must have at least one monitor on board. These requirements were originally effective in June 2004, but grantees could apply for an extension by providing documentation that the extension was in the best interests of the children being served.

NHTSA Proposes to Expand CSRS Requirements

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to extend the requirements of FMVSS 213, Child Restraint Systems, to restraints, including booster seats, designed for children weighing up to 80 pounds. NHTSA had previously extended the requirements to restraints for children weighing up to 65 pounds. This proposal would not require the use of CSRS for larger children; it would simply mean that those restraints would have to meet the crashworthiness standards of FMVSS 213.

NHTSA Recalls

Collins Bantam and Super Bantam, manufactured from July to November 2004. The amount of adhesive applied to the roof seams is inadequate for the type of adhesive, which fails to comply with FMVSS No. 221. Dealers will correct the defect by adding two additional screws between the current screws that attach the seams of the ceiling skins to the structural roof bows. The recall is expected to begin during the week of August 29. Also affected: **US Bus Sturdibus**, MY 2005, and a few **Girardin MB II and MB IV** minibuses manufactured between August 17 and October 29, 2004. Dates for these two recalls have not been announced.

IC Corp CE, Manufactured from June through March, 2005. The anchor bolt that is the pivot point for the driveline parking brake shoes may fatigue and break as a result of an incorrect surface treatment. If the bolt breaks, the park brake may not engage. International will replace the affected anchor bolts. The recall is expected to begin on October 28.

Specialty Manufacturing "5" Series Stop Arms. Recall #05516, All of the school bus manufacturers have issued notices concerning buses equipped with this stop arm, which were sold or registered in 20 Northeast and Midwest states,

including South Dakota. This affects stop arms installed on 3800 bus chassis and on certain BE, CE, FE, and RE School Bus models built between 1/7/02 and 6/22/05, and with stop arms having serial numbers between 480380 and 627609. In extremely cold weather, the micro switches used internally to position the stop sign in the open and closed positions may malfunction, causing the sign to open or close in an improper position, or not to open at all. This is not a safety recall, but what NHTSA terms a "safety improvement campaign." Nevertheless, all the manufacturers' dealers will replace the original switch with a switch pack that is not sensitive to extreme cold.

Blue Bird All American, TC-2000, and Vision school buses, manufactured from January 2001 to July 2005. These buses are equipped with a battery disconnect switch that has connections which may be loose on the battery switch studs, creating the potential for the bus to shut down while in operation. Blue Bird will instruct owners on how to repair the switch. The recall is expected to begin on September 30.

Thomas Built Saf-T-Liner C2 school buses, manufactured from July 2004 to August 26, 2005. The upper steering shaft pinch bolt may not be correctly tightened, resulting in the possible loss of the bolt and allowing joint separation and loss of steering. All Thomas and Freightliner dealers and direct warranty customers have been notified not to drive these buses until they have been inspected for the presence of torque seal at the steering bolts. Buses without torque seal will be will be tightened and torque seal will be added. Mail notification was expected to begin on September 9.

Question

Q. One of my districts wants to buy a large van to transport special needs students for an out-of-district program. The van would be outfitted with two wheelchair positions and a bench seat. Since the capacity will be less than ten, they say it doesn't have to be a school bus and it's legal for school transportation. Are they right?

A. No. Your district is counting the number of passengers, not the number of seating positions. What counts when determining whether a vehicle must meet school bus safety standards is the manufacturer's seating capacity. And exchanging seats for wheelchair positions doesn't reduce the capacity; for the purposes of classifying the vehicle (as a bus rather than an MPV, for example), each wheelchair position counts as four seating positions. Therefore, the vehicle as configured would have a seating capacity of 11 ($2 \times 4 + 3$) plus the driver, making it a bus subject to the school bus safety standards.

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